

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 002259

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR J. FRAZER
LONDON FOR C. GURNEY
PARIS FOR C. NEARY
NAIROBI FOR T. PFLAUMER
DS/OP/AF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2013

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: WITH MANY MEMBERS STILL IN JAIL, ZCTU CALLS FOR
WORK STOPPAGE

REF: HARARE 2257

Classified By: Political Officer Audu Besmer for reasons 1.5 b/d

11. (C) SUMMARY: Although the numbers are not finally confirmed, police arrested about 200 people nationwide in connection with planned ZCTU demonstrations on November 18. The ZCTU is calling for a snap work stoppage on November 20-21 to protest the detentions, however with no preparation, we see limited prospects for success of such an initiative. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) Information Officer Mlamleli Sibanda said that the 40 arrested in Harare were still being held on November 19. ZCTU Secretary General Wellington Chibebe, who was reportedly separated from the other arrestees on November 18, was together with them on November 19. Lawyers had been granted limited access to the arrestees, and were negotiating with police for their release on November 19. Although Sibanda reported that some 300 people had gathered to march in Harare, Emboffs never saw more than 50 people at the prescribed starting point (Ref).

13. (SBU) On November 18-19 Sibanda reported that some 300 people gathered on November 18 in Mutare to participate in the planned demonstration there. However, the lawyer representing the ZCTU arrestees, Trust Maanda of Hemming, Locke & Doyer, on November 19, said that he was representing 122 ZCTU clients and that none others were being processed by Mutare police. Both sources said that everyone who had gathered to participate in the march was arrested. Maanda said that all the arrestees were charged under the Miscellaneous Offenses Act, and released on November 18 after signing an admission of guilt statement, and paying a Z\$5,000 (US\$.84) fine.

14. (SBU) ZCTU said that some 3000 had gathered to participate in the march in Bulawayo, but we have no independent confirmation of this. There were rumors that some 500 people had been arrested in Bulawayo, however Sibanda said that only 17 were arrested, eight released without charge, and nine were still being held without charge on November 19. In addition to the worker hit by a vehicle (Ref), one other arrestee was injured by a police dog.

15. (U) The single arrestees in both Victoria Falls, and Gwanda were still being held without charge on November 19.

16. (SBU) Police arrested 13 people in Gweru who had gathered to march, and released only one by November 19. Sibanda said that lawyers in Gwanda had been denied access to the arrestees as of November 19.

17. (U) On November 18, police arrested five people in Masvingo, and six in Chinhoyi in connection with the planned marches. As of November 19 all were still in custody, and none had been charged.

18. (C) On November 19 Solidarity Center representative Gebre Gebremariam, and Sibanda said that members of the ZCTU leadership, who were not in custody, decided in a meeting on November 19 to stage a nationwide work stoppage on November 20 and 21 to protest the continued detention of ZCTU members, high taxation and economic deterioration. Sibanda said, and Emboff observed, that flyers were being distributed around Harare to inform people of the planned event, but that no other preparatory measures were being taken. Gebremariam said that the key would be the participation of public transport operators.

COMMENT:

19. (C) Although the ZCTU has previously acknowledged that stayaways have not effected changes in government policy, it has made the decision anyway to call a snap work stoppage without any groundwork - simply it seems as a statement of protest. The prospects for real participation on such short notice seem dim, but it appears the ZCTU is willing to risk

political capital and credibility to make the most of the Government detaining many of its members. In most cases without charges filed after 24 hours, it appears the Government intends to detain the ZCTU members for the full 48 hours allowed under the law. It is unclear how many people actually showed up to participate in the marches, but there is no indication that the public was involved in significant numbers.

10. (C) As in previous events of this kind the numbers of those arrested, beaten, and participating has been exaggerated by the participating organizations, and downplayed by the Government (The Herald reported that only 88 people had been arrested). With this type of misinformation circulating, and with the Daily News reporters no longer on the streets, it is increasingly difficult to obtain accurate information.
SULLIVAN